

August 13, 2004,

Comments: Psychopharmacologic Drugs Advisory Committee and the Pediatric Advisory Committee
Hearing September 13th, & 14th 2004.

Anuja Patel,

I understand these hearings are about children under 18 and whether Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors cause suicide. Anuja, I think the FDA should look into the fact that these SSRI's can cause suicide in all people regardless of their age. I know, because my father committed suicide July 20, 2000. He was 66 years old. I also understand that you are looking into the effect of the drugs when they are first started or their dose is increased, but I think you should look at other variables, like down regulation, and withdrawals, too! You see, my dad had been taking Prozac for 5 years before he ended his life.

It all started in 1995 when my dad was diagnosed with depression from his family doctor and told all he had to do was take a 20mg Prozac everyday for the rest of his life and he would be as good as new. The doctor told my dad that he had a chemical imbalance of Serotonin and that caused his depression. I am not a doctor, but I have done a lot of research since he died to understand why he would have taken his own life. I believe I know the answer now and I want to share it, so no one else has to die needlessly like my dad did. I have come to understand that there is no factual connection between depression and low Serotonin. In fact I have read that taking Prozac can cause great chemical imbalances. If this isn't true, then, for God's sake why are doctors being allowed to tell their patients that? Isn't it true that psychotherapy works without the side effects? Isn't uncovering all the childhood hurts and disappointments what really leaves us vulnerable for depression in the first place? How can a pill fix something that can only be fixed with knowledge, and love? Anyway my dad believed his doctor and faithfully took his Prozac everyday. I had told him several times during the 5 years that he took it, that I didn't think there was a chemical imbalance, but he insisted there was. I think he believed that because my dad had a learning disability and so he already thought he brain wasn't good enough. Isn't that the ingredients for depression to begin with? Not believing in or loving yourself?

Sometime in the spring of 2000 my dad did stop taking Prozac. He had told me that spring that he was racing inside and he couldn't slow down and he thought perhaps it was the Prozac that was making him feel that way. He had retired since he started on Prozac but he had three part time jobs at the same time. Not for the money, but for something to do, he couldn't sit still. He would work harder than young kids putting up retaining walls ect. He was going on very little sleep, sometimes only four hours a night. During the Memorial Weekend that year my parents went to my niece's graduation out of town and that's when my family realized that dad had stopped taking Prozac. He was very withdrawn and when my mom asked him what's the matter, he told her he had stopped taking Prozac and maybe that was why. When they came back to Omaha dad went back to his family doctor and he told my dad that his depression had returned because he stopped taking Prozac. He told dad to get re-started on it, but he did warn dad that he might not get the same results this time. That was the only thing his doctor was right about. My dad never got better. From Memorial Weekend on he continued downhill. Dad went back to his family doctor when he realized Prozac wasn't working and his doctor took him off Prozac and put him on Effexor and that didn't work either. Dad, by now, didn't want to see anyone, he wasn't working anymore and he didn't leave the house. Fourth of July that year my parents went to my sister's house to watch fireworks. She lives in the country and my mom and my sister thought it would be good for him to get out of the house. No other people were going to be there, they knew dad couldn't handle social situations now, but my sister said dad didn't talk at all while he was there and flinched at each fire work that went off, even though they were a long way away. He didn't even drive there, he let my mom drive, and that was not him. My sister said he seemed so distant and they didn't stay long. On July 11th his family doctor put my dad in the hospital. He said that way dad could be seen by a psychiatrist other wise it could take weeks to get him in to see one. Dad did see a psychiatrist then and so his family doctor released him from the hospital on the 12th of July and dad was to go to see the therapist. His family doctor also took dad off of Effexor and put him back on Prozac. Dad had to wait a few days before he could start taking the Prozac. His family doctor told him to increase the dosage of Prozac from 20mgs to 40mgs on the 16th

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of July. His doctor told him he just had to wait for the drugs to kick in and then he would be as good as new. Dad marked the days off on the calendar until he could start taking the 40mgs of Prozac. But that didn't help either. On the 19th of July my dear dad couldn't get off the couch. He was freezing in July! All light and sound bothered him terribly. The curtains in the family room were he laid had to be closed and he covered his head with pillows and blankets. Even the sound of my mom shuffling cards in the kitchen bothered him.

On July 20th 2000 my mom left to run an errand and while she was gone my dad got up off the couch and walked down to the basement and loaded his gun. He carried it back upstairs to his bathroom off his bedroom and shot himself in the head.

Anuja, please advise the committee to look into the side effect of down regulation and withdrawals. I believe my dad was suffering from withdrawals when he stopped taking the Prozac, not suffering a reoccurrence of his depression like his family doctor said. To me it just makes sense that he didn't get better because of down regulation. Isn't it true that the brain tries to compensate for the artificially high levels of Serotonin (caused by long term use) by having some of the receptors disappear? If enough of them had disappeared from my dad's Serotonin neurons then wouldn't that explain why he never recovered once he stopped taking Prozac. Perhaps so many receptors (either ax ions or the dendrites) had disappeared that once dad stopped taking Prozac the levels of Serotonin slowly dwindled through the remaining receptors and once the level dropped he began to show emotional signs of withdrawal (which his doctor thought was reoccurrence of depression). He never got better because there were so few receptors left to make any connections with. I truly believe this is what happened to my dad and it's tragic to think he was taking the pills trying to get better and believing his doctor, and all the time the pills were silently destroying him. I don't think family doctors should be allowed to prescribed these mind altering drugs. The FDA has a responsibility to the American Public to uncover the truth about these drugs. Please, Please include all humans in this investigation not just children, God created our minds the same, those toxic drugs effect us all, regardless of our age. Please, Please stand up and stop the lies about chemical imbalances that cause depression. That lie, is a medical fraudulent disaster which is keeping thousands of Americans needlessly taking SSRI's, and suffering silently, and slowly, from down regulation.

Thank you for allowing me to add my comments to this vastly important issue.

Sincerely Hopeful,

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